

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 NEA-10 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00

EB-11 FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-07

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H-02 L-03 NSC-10 PA-03 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 RSR-01

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1086

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

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AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY BANGUI

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E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS/ PFOR, EAID, FR, XJ

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SUBJECT: FRENCH POLICY IN BLACK AFRICA

SUMMARY: INSTALLATION OF NEW FRENCH GOVERNMENT WITH NEW SECRETARY OF STATE FOR COOPERATION AND COMPLETION OF SECOND SET OF REVISED COOPERATION ACCORDS PROVIDE BASIS FOR ASSESSING OVERALL FRENCH POLICY TOWARDS BLACK AFRICA. FLEXIBILITY AND OPENNESS ENUNCIATED BY FORMER COOPERATION SECRETARY BILLECOCQ REMAIN FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF FRENCH POLICY, BUT AFTER TWO RELATIVELY UNFAVORABLE NEGOTIATIONS WITH MAURITANIA AND MADAGASCAR, IT IS CLEAR THAT FRENCH ARE PREPARED TO BE TOUGH WHEN THEIR INTERESTS SO DICTATE AND THAT NEW COOPERATION SECRETARY DENIAU IS BY NO MEANS AS OUTWARD-LOOKING AS HIS PREDECESSOR. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, PROCESS OF ECONOMIC DECOLONIZATION MAY BE DIFFIULT WITH PERIODIC CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN FRANCE AND AFRICA. USG WILL WISH TO STAND BACK AND AVOID STANCE WHICH WOULD MAKE IT HARDER FOR EITHER SIDE TO MAKE MUTUAL READJUSTMENTS AND ACCOMMODATIONS WHICH ARE NEEDED. END SUMMARY.

1. ON TWO SUCCESSIVE DAYS, IN UNCHARACTERISTIC BURST OF SPEECHMAKING, FRENCH PRIME MINISTER MESSMER SPOKE OF HIS GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH TO FOREIGN AID. ON MAY 28 AT CELEBRATION OF 50 TH ANNIVERSARY OF " ACADEMIE D' OUTRE MER" MESSMER STRESSED THAT EVOLUTION OF FRENCH AID POLICY WAS BOTH " INEVITABLE AND DESIRABLE". GOF, HE SAID, BASED ITS POLICY ON THE RIGHT OF FREE DECISION BY STATES CONCERNED. COOPERATION COULD ONLY RESULT IF THERE WAS A COMMON WILL BETWEEN FRANCE AND ITS PARTNERS. NOTHING COULD BE IMPOSED. IN COMPETITION FOR ECONOMIC RESOURCES, COOPERATION COULD REPLACE PREVIOUS CONFRONTATIONS AND WARS. (SIC).

2. ON FOLLOWING DAY, SPEAKING TO OVERSEAS PRESS CORPS, MESSMER REITERATED THEME THAT " COOPERATION COULD NOT BE IMPOSED." FRANCE'S AFRICAN PARTNERS, HE ACKNOWLEDGED, COULD DENOUNCE ACCORDS IF THEY WISHED. FRANCE HAD NO REASON TO BE ANGRY WITH THEM. SPEAKING OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND 12,000 COOPERANTS IN BLACK AFRICA AND 18,000 IN NORTH AFRICA, MESSMER STRESSED THAT INCREASINLGY THEIR TASK WILL BE TO TRAIN TECHNICIANS RATHER THAN TO REPLACE LOCAL EMPLOYEES. TALKING TO SAME POINTS, COOPERATION SECRETARY DENIAU TOLD FRENCH WEEKLY LE POINT THAT TRAINING AND ASSISTANCE WERE PREFERABLE TO SUBSTITUTION. (HOWEVER, IN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR, HE EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT SOME

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COUNTRIES COULD SURVIVE WITHOUT FRENCH FUNCTIONARIES IN ESSENTIAL MINISTRIES.) DENIAU CONDEMNED TWO KINDS OF NEW COLONIALISM: THE REPRODUCTION OF EDUCATONAL AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS IDENTICAL TO THOSE IN FRANCE AND DECISIONS BASED ON A PRIORI ASSUMPTIONS OF WHAT WAS SUITABLE FOR AFRICANS. HE INTENDED, HE SAID, TO AVOID

BOTH.

3. FOR ALL HIGH SOUNDING PROPOSALS FOR AID BASED ON COOPERATION, THERE HAS BEEN NOTICEABLE HARDENING OF FRENCH POSITION WITH DEPARTURE OF BILLECOCQ AND ADVENT OF DENIAU. WHILE BASIC FRENCH POSITION REMAINS UNCHANGED, I. E. GOF WILLINGNESS TO MODIFY COOPERATION ACCORDS IN DIRECTIONS AFRICANS DESIRE, THEY HAVE ADOPTED POSITION THAT AFRICANS CANNOT EXPECT PRIVILEGED AID RELATIONSHIP TO CONTINUE IF THEY DO NOT OPT TO REMAIN PART OF FRANC AREA, ALTHOUGH THIS QUESTION HAS STILL NOT BEEN RESOLVED BETWEEN FRENCH MINISTRIES CONCERNED. MAURITANIA AND MADAGASCAR HAVE LEFT FRANC ZONE, BUT PRICE HAS BEEN END TO FRENCH BUDGETARY ASSISTANCE, GUARANTEE OF CONVERTIBILITY OF CURRENCY AND SUPPORT TO BALANCE OF PAYMENTS POSITION.

4. MOST FRENCH OFFICIALS ARE AT PAINS TO STRESS THAT NEITHER MAURITANIA NOR MADAGASCAR ARE TYPICAL CASES AND HENCE SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AS PRECEDENTS. NONETHELESS, IT IS PROBABLE THAT AFRICAN COUNTRIES WILL SEE PRECEDENTS AND WILL JUDGE THEMSELVES WHETHER REQUIREMENTS OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY OUTWEIGH THE NEED FOR FRENCH ECONOMIC SUPPORT. IN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, FOCCART'S DEPUTY JOURNIAC SAID HE THOUGHT SOME OF POORER COUNTRIES OF AFRICA WOULD ALSO SEEK MAJOR CHANGES IN RELATIONSHIP WITH FRANCE, WHEREAS MORE PROSPEROUS COUNTRIES LIKE IVORY COAST AND GABON WOULD SEE VALUE OF CONTINUED CLOSE TIES WITH FRANCE. THUS, ALTHOUGH WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICAN COUNTRIES BELONG TO MORE INTEGRATED SYSTEMS THAN MADAGASCAR, AND FURTHER WITHDRAWALS FROM FRANC ZONE WOULD HAVE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR ECONOMIC COHESIVNESS OF FRANCOPHONE AREA, OTHER SPECIAL CASES MAY APPEAR, FOR EXAMPLE IN THOSE STATES WHOSE ECONOMIC FUTURE IS INTIMATELY LINKED WITH NIGERIA, SUCH AS NIGER AND DAHOMEY.

5. IN ASSESSING IMPORTANCE OF FRANC ZONE TO FRENCH INTERESTS , IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT IN 1972 THE ZONE, TAKEN IN ITS BROADEST
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SENSE TO INCLUDE TUNISIA, MOROCCO AND ALGERIA, ACCOUNTED FOR ONLY NINE PER CENT OF FRENCH EXPORTS AND ONLY 6.36 PER CENT OF IMPORTS. OF THIS TOTAL, LESS THAN HALF IS ACCOUNTED FOR BY FORMER FRENCH COLONIES OF BLACK AFRICA. OF ALL SUB- SAHARAN COUNTRIES OF ZONE, ONLY GABON HAS A SIGNIFICANT SURPLUS WITH FRANCE (OF 224 MILLION FRANCS), AND ONLY TWO OTHERS, CAR AND SENEGAL, HAD EVEN NOMINAL SURPLUSES OF TWO AND FIVE MILLION FRANCS RESPECTIVELY. THUS TRADE WITH AFRICA IS OF DECLINING IMPORTANCE IN TERMS OF FRANCE' S OVERALL ECONOMIC TRADE, AND FRANCE IS UNLIKELY TO MAKE MAJOR CONCESSIONS ON MATTERS OF ECONOMIC PRINCIPLE TO PROTECT THE LIMITED MARKETS WHICH NOW EXIST.

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6. WHILE IT IS TOO EARLY TO BE SURE, IT NOW SEEMS CONCEIVABLE
THAT FRANC ZONE MAY BE ON WAY TO IMPORTANT MODIFICATION AS

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PERHAPS MAY BE OVERALL SPECIAL RELATIONSHIPS BINDING FRANCOPHONE COUNTRIES TO FRANCE AND EUROPE. WHEN IMPORTANT FRENCH INTERESTS ARE INVOLVED, AS IN IVORY COAST, MADAGASCAR, GABON, AND SENEGAL, WHERE THERE ARE LARGE FRENCH COMMUNITIES AND INVESTMENTS, FRENCH CAN BE EXPECTED TO ATTEMPT TO PRESERVE THESE INTERESTS TENACIOUSLY. IN LAST ANALYSIS, HOWEVER, THEY WILL ACQUIESCE IN MAJOR TRANSFORMATION AND WITHDRAWAL IF AFRICANS SO DEMAND.

7. IN ADDITION, EVOLUTION OF FRANCO- AFRICAN RELATIONS ARE BRINGING INTO QUESTION BROADER FRENCH ROLE IN INDIAN OCEAN. FRENCH ARE ABANDONING BASES IN MADAGASCAR. COMORO ISLANDS ARE ON ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE. OAU AND OTHER AFRICAN STATES ARE PRESSING FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM DJIBOUTI. WHILE FRENCH UNLIKELY TO ADOPT PRECIPITATE EAST- OF- SUEZ WITHDRAWAL POLICY, AND WILL ENDEAVOR TO REDEPLOY THEIR EXISTING FORCES ON ISLAND OF REUNION, BASIC ELEMENTS OF FRENCH PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN UNDERGOING MODIFICATION. FRENCH ABILITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO REGIONAL SECURITY AND STABILITY IS BEING ERODED.

8. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND OF ERODING INTERESTS, THERE ARE INCREASING DEMANDS IN FRANCE FOR RESTRUCTURING OF POLICY STRUCTURE. PRIME MINISTER MESSMER TOLD PRESS CORPS HE WAS NOT OPPOSED IN PRINCIPLE TO CHANGES IN ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES FOR " COOPERATION". DENIAU HAS RECENTLY BEEN GIVEN CONSULTATIVE ROLE FOR ALL AID TO AFRICA AND FOCCART HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN AREAS OTHER THAN TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY OF FORMER COLONIES. GRADUALLY WHAT SEEMS TO BE EMERGING IS AFRICA- WIDE POLICY FOCUSING LESS ON PRIVILEGED RELATIONSHIP WITH FORMER MEMBERS OF " CHASSE GARDEE" AND MORE ON OVERALL FRENCH AFRICAN INTERESTS. IN THIS REGARD, NIGERIA AND ZAIRE LIKELY TO LOOM AS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT COUNTRIES IN TERMS OF FRENCH INVESTMENT, TRADE, AND MILITARY SALES. SOUTH AFRICA WILL ALSO BE SEEN AS INCREASINGLY SIGNIFICANT MARKET AND ALSO AS COUNTRY WHICH ACCEPTS, INDEED WELCOMES, FRENCH STRATEGIC PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN.

9. IN GENERAL, PRICE WHICH FRANCE PREPARED TO PAY FOR MAINTENANCE OF PRIVILEGED RELATIONSHIP WITH FRANCOPHONE AFRICA IS DECLINING. FRENCH PUBLIC IS BECOMING FRETFUL WITH CRITICISM OF FRANCE BY LEADERS SUCH AS BOKASSA, TOMBALBYE OR DIORI. COSTS OF PROGRAMS SEEM UNRELATED TO POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC
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RESULTS. FRANCE WILL NOT, HOWEVER, DISENGAGE PRECIPITOUSLY FROM FRANCOPHONE AFRICA NOR ARE DAYS OF ITS INFLUENCE DOOMED.

FRENCH HAVE IMPORTANT INTERESTS AT STAKE; POMPIDOU IS COMMITTED TO GAULLIST IDEAL OF FRENCH- SPEAKING COMMUNITY UNDER FRENCH LEADERSHIP; AND THERE IS HUMANITARIAN LOBBY DEMANDING THAT FRANCE CONTINUE ITS HIGH LEVEL OF COMMITMENT TO LEAST DEVELOPED AREAS OF AFRICA, PARTICULARLY IMPOVERISHED DROUGHT STRICKEN COUNTRIES OF SAHEL.

10. IN PERIOD OF SHIFTING FRENCH PRIORITIES AND WIDENING FRENCH PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS AFRICA, WHAT SHOULD BE USG POSTURE? WE WILL OBVIOUSLY HAVE TO FACE GROWING COMMERCIAL COMPETITION IN ANGLOPHONE COUNTRIES AND IN ZAIRE WHERE OUR OWN POSITION TRADITIONALLY STRONG. WE WILL EQUALLY HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO COMPETE MORE VIGOROUSLY IN THOSE MARKETS AND COUNTRIES WHERE FRENCH INFLUENCE IS ON WANE. ON OTHER HAND, WE HAVE NOT RESOURCES TO REPLACE FRENCH ECONOMIC AID, AND WE SHOULD BE EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS IN RAISING AFRICAN EXPECTATIONS THAT LESS INTIMATE TIES WITH FRANCE WILL RESULT IN INCREASED U. S. ASSISTANCE OR IN ENCOURAGING THEM IN DEMANDS WHICH WILL LEAD TO ABRUPT DECLINE IN FRENCH COMMITMENT TO THEM.

11. CERTAINLY WE WILL WANT TO AVOID GIVING ANY IMPRESSION THAT WE SEEK FRENCH EVICTION. IN TERMS OF OUR OVERALL POLICY TOWARDS FRANCE, AND OUR LONGER TERM INTEREST IN COOPERATIVE FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP, WE WILL ONLY ADD TO EXISTING SUSPICIONS OF U. S. IN GOF, IF WE ARE SEEN TO BE PUSHING STRATEGY OF ECONOMIC DECOLONIZATION. IN TENSE AND UNCERTAIN ATMOSPHERE WHICH LIKELY TO ACCOMPANY THE NEXT STAGE IN FRENCH AFRICAN POLICY, CONTINUED CONSULTATION WILL BE NECESSARY TO KEEP FRENCH INFORMED OR WHERE WE ARE GOING, WHAT RESOURCES WE ARE COMMITTING AND IN MAKING CLEAR THAT WE HAVE NO PARTICULAR POLITICAL AXE TO GRIND. IF WE ARE ABLE TO SUSTAIN A POSTURE OF SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING OF FRENCH AFRICAN PROBLEMS, OTHER ELEMENTS OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FRANCE, WHICH ARE OF MORE CRITICAL NATIONAL INTEREST TO US, ARE LIKELY TO BENEFIT.

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